



University of Mumbai

SAMBHASHAN

CALL FOR PAPERS

Celluloid Nations

Cinema of India as Archive of the Nation-Building Project

Language

Region & Nation

Caste & Dalit

Counter-Archive

State & Censorship

Documentary

Gender & Religion

Minority

Digital & Streaming

Diaspora

India produces more films than any other country in the world — not one cinema but dozens, in languages that carry distinct literary traditions, political histories, aesthetic inheritances and relationships to the idea of the nation. To speak of "*the cinema of India*" archiving the nation-building project is, from the outset, to confront a paradox: **which cinema? Which nation? Whose building project?**

This Call for Papers invites interdisciplinary scholarship that takes the cinema of India in its extraordinary multiplicity as an archival form — not a neutral record of the nation-building project, but one of its active and contested sites. Films do not simply document how the nation imagines itself. They participate in that imagination, shape it, encode it — and sometimes crack it open.

As Jacques Derrida argued in *Archive Fever*, the archive is never innocent. Applied to cinema, this raises urgent questions: what versions of India have been preserved in the cinematic record, and at what cost? What has been suppressed, distorted, or rendered invisible? The emergence of **Ambedkarite cinema** — Pa. Ranjith's *Kabali*, *Kaala*, and *Sarpatta Parambarai*; Nagraj Manjule's *Fandry* and *Sairat* — represents something categorically different from "regional cinema." These films actively construct a counter-archive.

From **Tamil cinema's Dravidian imaginary** to the Malayalam new wave, from the Films Division's state documentary apparatus to emergent Adivasi and Dalit filmmaking, the cinemas of India are too plural, too contradictory, and too alive to be reduced to a single story. This issue holds that plurality as a question, not a resolved answer.

"The archive, as Derrida argued, is never innocent. The **archon** who guards the record also determines what enters it — and what is committed to forgetting."

— FROM THE EDITORIAL FRAMEWORK, SAMBHASHAN SPECIAL ISSUE

◆ PROPOSED THEMES & AREAS

The following areas are indicative, not exhaustive. Contributors are welcome to work within, across, or beyond them.

01 Language, Region, Nation: The Cinema of India Beyond Hindi	02 Alternative Nationalisms: Regional Cinema and the Counter-National Imaginary	03 Sacred Screens: Religion, Mythology and the Archiving of National Identity
04 The State Looks at Itself: Documentary Cinema and the Nation-Building Project	05 Speaking Truth to the Nation: Independent Documentary as Dissent and Counter-Memory	06 Cinema from Below: Caste, Subalternity and the Archive of Exclusion
07 Land, Forest, Screen: Adivasi Communities and the Politics of Cinematic Representation	08 The Gendered Nation: Women, Cinema and the Archive of Belonging	09 The Constitutive Other: Minority Communities and the National Cinematic Record
10 What Cannot Be Shown: Censorship, Power and the Boundaries of the Cinematic Record	11 Cinema Against the Mainstream: Parallel, New Wave and Alternative Film Traditions	12 The Star and the Nation: Stardom, Populism and Political Mobilisation on Screen
13 Margins of the Map: Cinema from and about India's Contested Territories	14 The Digital Turn: Streaming, Algorithms and the Remaking of the National Archive	15 Cinema Beyond Borders: Diaspora, Transnationalism and Archiving Belonging

DISCIPLINES WELCOME Film Studies · History · Sociology · Philosophy · Political Theory · Cultural Studies · Linguistics · Postcolonial Studies · Feminist Theory · Dalit Studies · Adivasi Studies

◆ SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

WORD LIMITS & FORMAT

- ▶ Research Papers: 4,000 – 6,000 words
- ▶ Commentaries: 1,500 – 2,000 words
- ▶ Book Reviews: up to 1,000 words
- ▶ Original, scholarly, critical and empirical work
- ▶ Remove all author references for anonymous peer review

STYLE & FORMATTING

- ▶ Times New Roman, 12pt, double-spaced
- ▶ Chicago Manual of Style, 17th Edition (Chapter 15)
- ▶ Author-date referencing system throughout
- ▶ Submit as a Word document (.doc or .docx)
- ▶ Include a statement of originality or plagiarism certificate

LAST DATE FOR SUBMISSION

30 June 2026

SUBMIT YOUR PAPER

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